

4. Recusal of Assistant Secretary Ada Deer

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Deer recused herself from the Hudson application decision, probably sometime between May 22 and the end of June 1995. As Assistant Secretary, Deer was delegated the Secretary's decision-making authority on such land-to-trust applications and would have been expected to sign the ultimate decision. Prior to her recusal, Deer did discuss the application in at least general terms with applicant tribal leaders and signed some correspondence. Nevertheless, Deer and other DOI personnel describe her as having been uninvolved in ongoing internal discussions about the application.

Deer stated she recused herself because she is from Wisconsin, is acquainted with many of the tribal leaders involved in the matter and had contributed \$250 to help retire the campaign debt of gaiashkibos, chairman of the applicant LCO tribe, which he accrued during his unsuccessful run in the 1994 Republican primary for Wisconsin state senate. Deer was already thinking about whether she should recuse herself under these facts when her assistant, Michael Chapman, suggested she should consider whether to recuse herself. It is unclear when Deer began having these misgivings about her role in the matter; she had previously expressed none to any tribal leaders with whom she discussed Hudson.

Deer reported that although she was a big supporter of Indian gaming for economic development, she never knew enough about the Hudson application to render an opinion about whether it should be approved or not. Deer said she did not believe she would have been unduly influenced by her acquaintances or support for gaiashkibos, but was concerned that these facts